



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 on August 9, 2016 at 6 p.m.

PRC MINUTES August 9, 2016

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Elaine Powell, Chair
 Kendel Bryant, Vice Chair
 Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary
 Sterling Martin
 Aubin Guinness
 Tonya Phifer
 Brian Cox
 Ed Barnhart
 Heidi Pruess
 Abe Early
 Doug Burnett
 Mary Johnson
 Michael Kirschman, Deputy Director, Park and Recreation

PRC Absent:

Tony Arreaza

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Tonya Phifer: Chair Powell welcomed newly appointed South 3 Park and Recreation Commissioner, Tonya Phifer. Commissioner Phifer was appointed by the BOCC at the August 3rd BOCC meeting. All of the Commissioners introduced themselves, the park district they represent and a little about themselves.

Public Appearance:

Richard Shaw came before the Park and Recreation Commission to express the concerns of Sr. Citizens surrounding the move from the Shamrock Sr. Center, to the Methodist Home Recreation

Center, with the main concern being “why” were they being relocated. Mr. Shaw provided a document listing all concerns of the senior citizens and can be viewed here: [Shamrock Seniors Relocation Concerns](#).

Proclamations and Awards:

Jeff Robinson Retirement: Michael Kirschman, Deputy Director, recognized the retirement of Jeff Robinson and presented him with a retirement recognition award. Jeff was the Division Director of Park Operations and was employed by the City/County for over 31 years. Jeff was present with his family and shared memories of working with the Park and Recreation Department.

Presentations:

River District Presentation: **Creighton Call** of Crescent Communities and Tracy Dodson of **Lincoln Harris** shared a presentation on the River District project, a master planned, mixed use project west of the Charlotte Airport between I485 and the Catawba River. The presentation covered the projects plans for responsible planning and land use; open space, trails and parks; water quality enhanced measures; the developments planned districts; connectivity and future transportation improvements. This generational project is being planned on 1,377 acres with an approximate 20 year build out will include:

- Over 550 acres preserved for:
 - Nature/ Tree Save
 - Trails/Creek Areas
 - Greenways
 - Parks
- Office, retail, hotel and residential space

Mr. Call and Ms. Dodson expressed their desire to continue a positive partnership with Park and Recreation as this project progresses. This presentation can be viewed here: [River District](#)

Discussion and responses followed around the following:

- The City of Charlotte does not intend to sell their property located within this development. Current intention is for future water intake. If/when land swap conversations begin, Park and Recreation should be at the table.
- Possible bridge connection to Gaston County. Insure road infrastructure will accommodate this possibility should it ever come to fruition.
- Transportation improvements as outlined in the presentation.
- Proposed park land in the development will be reserved for purchase at a discounted price for a specific amount time. Space for greenways would be dedicated.
- Deputy Director Kirschman noted that the current proposed 20 acres for park land in this development will not nearly be enough for the recreational needs of a population this size at buildout.
- Construction projected to begin 2019, 2020
- Partner with current and future CMS schools on or adjacent to the development site for access to more active recreation.
- Chair Powell invited Crescent Communities and Lincoln Harris along with one of their engineers to attend a Stewardship Advisory Council meeting. The developers agreed to attend a future Stewardship Advisory Council meeting. Chair Powell will follow-up.
- August 22 is the date of the City Public Hearing for this project.

Capital Planning Pecha Kucha Presentation: Lee Jones, Division Director of Capital Planning presented a Pecha Kucha style presentation on the life in the day of a capital planner. The presentation gave a humorous look at the trials, tribulations and triumphs in the life of a capital planner. This presentation can be viewed here: [Capital Planning Presentation 8/9/2016](#)

Advisory Council Appointments/Reappointments:

Aquatics:

Motion was made by Commissioner Cox to appoint **GINNY WOOLARD, DIANE DUNN and JANET HARRISON** to a special 3rd term on the Aquatics Advisory Council, expiring 6/2019, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously.

Central:

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to appoint **MELISSA LOWE and ANDREW BOWEN** to a 1st 3-year term on the Central Advisory Council, expiring 6/2019; to appoint **HOWARD SWEET** to a 2nd term, expiring 6/2019 and to appoint **THOMAS MARSHALL and JOHN BRIEN** to a special 3rd term, expiring 6/2019, which was seconded by Commissioner Early and approved unanimously.

South:

Commissioner Barnhart recognized a vacancy on the South Advisory Council due to the term expiration of **CAROLYN MILLEN**.

Director's Report:

Northern Towns Park and Recreation Presentation – Re: Regional Recreation Centers:

Michael Kirschman provided a recap of the Northern Towns Park and Recreation Commissions meeting from the previous evening (8/8/2016) at which he made a presentation on regional recreation centers and the current priority rankings for facilities and amenities. This presentation can be viewed here: [Regional Recreation Centers](#).

Attendance from Mecklenburg Count included, Commissioner Jim Puckett, Park and Recreation Commissioners (Elaine Powell, Kendel Bryant, Aubin Guinness, Doug Burnett and Heidi Pruess) and members of the North Advisory Council.

The meeting focused mainly on the proposed Northern Regional Recreation Center and concerns related to the recent approval by the BOCC to build the Eastern Regional Recreation Center, a project not included in the 2008 bond package, and the approved funding of \$1 million to begin the design process.

Background as it relates to the 2008 bond package, the 2014 5-year CIP rankings, the Northern Regional Recreation Center (NRRC), the Eastern Regional Recreation Center (ERRC) and concerns raised.

- The NRRC was included as a project in the 2008 park bond referendum
- The ERRC was not included in the 2008 park bond referendum as Eastway Park was currently under Phase I construction.
- The NRRC, along with 19 other projects, did not rank high enough to be included in the 5-year CIP ranking through fiscal year '18. These remaining projects will be ranked using a new CIP ranking process, the details of which are not yet known. However, Deputy Kirschman assured the Towns that Park and Recreation's recommendation, regardless of

the ranking process, will be to complete the park projects from the voter approved 2008 bond package first before any other projects.

- In 2013 a 41-acre parcel of land on Old Statesville Road was purchased for the future site of the NRRC.
- Neighborhoods surrounding Eastway Park advocated for Phase II of Eastway Park. While Phase II called for many more fields, the residents asked that Phase II be the Eastern Regional Recreation Center called for in the Park and Recreation Master Plan. This advocacy push resulted in the project being approved by 5 BOCC votes, moving the project ahead of the NRRC.
- Questions were raised by the Northern Towns as to how the ERRC was able to move ahead of the NRRC in the queue. Deputy Director Kirschman responded that projects often get added to the queue due to:
 - Safety and security reasons (Waymer Center)
 - Partnership opportunities (Memorial Stadium/Queens Tennis Complex)
 - Politics (Eastern Regional Recreation Center)
- The Northern Towns want to make sure that the NRRC will not be forgotten and will be funded. As a result, a resolution to this end was presented at the joint meeting. After discussion, it was decided that each town would draft their own resolutions to provide to the County. One edit to the resolution will be to ask for funding to begin the design process on the NRRC. Deputy Kirschman shared with the PRC that he had no problem with the Town's resolution but did make the following points:
 - Aquatic amenities have been added in the North: Ramsey Creek Beach and \$1 million to the Huntersville Family Fitness and Aquatic Center
 - While the Northern Towns would like to also be given the money to begin the design process on the NRRC, this project may not be ranked until fiscal year '20, '21 or '22 in which case design now might prove to be a waste. Michael also made it clear that at no time has anyone said that the ERRC was being built in lieu of the NRRC.

Northern Towns Resolutions: Discussion followed among the Commissioners regarding the Northern Towns Resolutions and if the North Advisory Council and or the PRC should also sign a similar resolution in support of the Northern Towns resolutions. It was decided that the PRC would stand by their motion made on March 8, 2016 which stated: ***The Park and Recreation Commission endorses the capital prioritization process as determined by the Park and Recreation Department.*** That motion carried 11 – 1. In addition, it was decided that prior to the North AC drafting a resolution regarding the NRRC, a presentation by one of the PRC would be made at their next meeting to explain PRC's position and the motion made in March. The North AC can then decide if they want to come up with their own resolution.

Other topics discussed included:

Funding: The ERRC is estimated to cost \$40 million. Concern was expressed that funding would be taken from other projects. Deputy Kirschman responded that no mention has been made that there will be a funding adjustment this fiscal year because of the \$1.5 million for the Waymer Center and \$1 million for the ERRC design and historically, all projects approved on the 5-year CIP have been funded. The County typically allocates \$130 million for all capital projects, so how a \$40-million-dollar park project will affect funding for other park projects is currently unknown. Michael also noted for information, that CMS will be seeking a \$750-million-dollar bond referendum to possibly go on the ballot next fall. It was suggested that it might be time for

another park bond as well. Michael responded that it is the intention of the County's Finance Department and the County Manager's office to pay for schools with bonds and to pay for all other capital projects with PayGo funds.

Consent Items

Motion was made by Commissioner McMannis to approve all consent items, including the Park and Recreation Commission minutes of June 14, 2016, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryant, and approved unanimously.

PRC Chair Report:

Double Oaks Aquatic Center Groundbreaking: The County broke ground on this project which, when complete, will have a zero depth entry, splash pad and a 6-lane lap pool. It is projected this outdoor pool project will open for Memorial Day, 2017. The event was attended by staff from the County Manager's office, elected officials, Park and Recreation Commissioners and members of the Aquatic AC.

Brooklyn Village: The Park and Recreation Commission stands united in their continued advocacy for a 5-acre park in the Brooklyn Village development as stated in their April 19, 2016 position statement.

Ramsey Creek Beach Update: The Department continues to stay in communication with the neighbors of Ramsey Creek Park, the Town of Cornelius and the Cornelius Police Department to address their concerns. Most issues have been addressed. Currently the average number of people on the beach during the week is 40 and 80 on the weekend. Regardless, there still seems to be a contingency that wants to see the beach closed.

In response to the water quality, the current hypothesis is that higher levels of bacterial occur following a heavy rain. The Department will monitor this with continued water testing. If this proves to be the case, it may be that the beach will automatically be closed the day after a heavy rain. The Town of Cornelius has sampled simultaneously along with the Department and results have been the same.

PRC Reports and Requests

Park and Recreation Commission Executive Committee Nominations: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Cox to nominate the current PRC Executive Team of **Elaine Powell**, Chair; **Kendel Bryant**, Vice-Chair and **Tristan McMannis** – Executive Secretary for reappointment to an additional term expiring 6/2017, which was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart. The nomination was accepted and the motion carried unanimously.

Aubin Guinness: Pearle Street Park Update? Elaine responded that it was her understanding that the diocese does not want to sell.

NOTE: Director Garges clarified at the September 13, 2016 PRC meeting that the diocese was willing to sell the remnant as long as all of the proceeds went back into the park.

Kendel Bryant: Brooklyn Village Development will hold their Open Space Community meetings the week of September 12, 2016. PRC will want to attend this meeting. Depending on the date of the meeting, the September 13, 2016 PRC meeting may need to be changed.

The Friendship Sportsplex dedication will be held August 30, 2016 at 10 a.m.

Kendel will work on arranging a Saturday kayaking outing for PRC in September.

Tristan McMannis: UNCC has received a grant from Sharon Towers to provide free quarterly health risk and fitness assessments to all seniors in the centers.
The Mecklenburg Senior Games have wrapped up with 214 seniors qualified to participate in the NC Senior Games.

A “Celebration of Champions” brunch will be held to congratulate the winners.

Ed Barnhart: Looking forward to working with staff and partners on the American Legion Memorial Stadium project. Deputy Kirschman shared this project will be approximately \$24 million with 1/3 of the funding coming from the County, 1/3 from CRVA and 1/3 from private funding.

Construction on the LSC GW section, Tyvola to Huntingtowne Farms Park, has begun.

The Department will begin work on gabion repairs on the Liz Hair greenway section.

Heidi Pruess: A map showing the uptown parks with athletic amenities is available.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.